

# Clements Library

## Occasional Bulletins

### The David V. Tinder Collection of Michigan Photography

Thirty years ago, the quantity of historical photography at the Clements Library barely merited the term “collection.” Born of small groups of portraits and albums acquired with manuscript collections, today’s holdings amount to over 60,000 photographic images. This number is expected to double in the coming few years. The Library has been very successful in acquiring important photographic materials individually and in large groups, such as the James S. Schoff Civil War Collection, the highly diverse Frederick P. Currier Collection, and the Mark A. Anderson Collection of Post-Mortem Photography. But it is largely the addition of the remarkable David V. Tinder Collection of Michigan Photography that has caused the huge expansion of photographic holdings at the Clements.

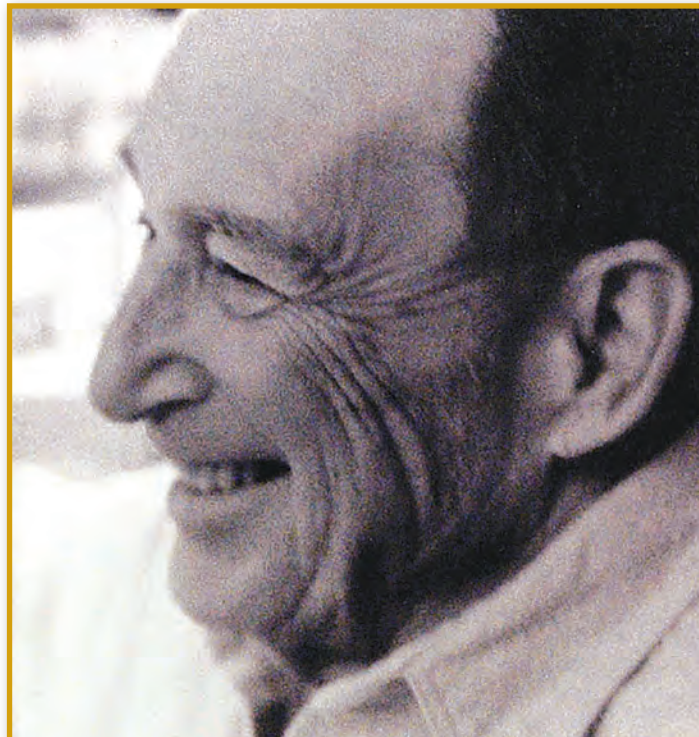
The Tinder collection contains examples of virtually every photographic format in use in the Great Lakes State during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, *cartes de visite*, cabinet photographs, tintypes, stereographs, real-photo postcards, and mounted and un-mounted paper prints. These materials are primarily vernacular photographs of life in Michigan, taken by both professionals and amateurs from the 1840s into the mid-twentieth century. When fully available, the David V. Tinder Collection of Michigan Photography at the Clements Library will contain approximately 100,000 vintage images.

This vast pool of visual information will provide exceptional resources for the study of agriculture, mining, lumbering, industry,

urban and suburban culture, portraiture, domestic life, leisure, travel, transportation, and many other subjects. In addition to supporting local history research, the collection offers evidence for the study of wider topics, such as the transformations caused by the exploitation of natural resources, the industrialization of American cities and occupations, changes in fashion and dress, racial and cultural identity, the role of fraternal organizations in society, and the uses of photography in business, domestic, and social life.

The landmark acquisition of the Tinder collection was made possible by David B. Walters, who wished to honor Harold L. Walters, University of Michigan class of 1947, Engineering, and Marilyn S. Walters, University of Michigan class of 1950, LSA. Substantial donations to the collection have also been made by David Tinder himself, his friends, and family members.

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David V. Tinder. Photo by Laura McGuire, 2001.

Dave Tinder’s collecting career has had many incarnations. Tiffany glass, Japanese metalwork, and antique ceramics have all had a place in his home. Inspired by William C. Darrah’s 1964 book, *A History of Stereographs in America and Their Collection*, he amassed a large number of international photographic stereo views. By the early 1970s he began trading his international collection for Michigan stereo views and commenced seriously collecting other early photographic formats related to Michigan subjects and photographers.

As he collected, Tinder became increasingly interested in the lives and careers of early photographers and began compiling



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the forthcoming *Directory of Early Michigan Photographers*. This led to the recognition of Tinder as *the* authority on the subject. Over time, he expanded the scope of his collection to include real-photo postcards and other formats from the twentieth century, and the research period for the *Directory* was extended to include photographers who were active before 1920. Many regional directories of historical photography have been published, but Tinder's work sets a new standard for inclusiveness, scope, and detail. While a dearth of information has kept some entries brief, the lives of many Michigan photographers have been traced "from the cradle to the grave," as Dave likes to say. With over 8,000 records, the *Directory* stands as an unsurpassed resource for historians, collectors, curators, archivists, genealogists, and anyone interested in the early history of photography in the United States.

The significance of Dave Tinder's achievements as a collector and scholar came to the attention of the William L. Clements Library staff in 2002, and we have developed a close relationship with him. Tinder is enthusiastic about his collection and work

becoming a resource for others to use, and he has agreed to make the text of his directory available online through the Clements Library's website.

The Clements is grateful for the support of the Michigan Photographic Historical Society which provided three paid summer internships to assist with the processing and cataloging of the Tinder collection. We have also benefited from the substantial contributions of many excellent volunteers and temporary employees, including Joel Hickey, Les High, Francine Keyes, William Lewis, Jorge Lopez-McKnight, Megan Marion, Lori Mott, Eve Neiger, Marjorie O'Brien, May Oyler, Diana Sykes, James Thiry, Jayne Ptolemy, and Michael Wesenberg.

Dave Tinder continues to actively collect Michigan images and is enthusiastically revising and expanding the *Directory of Early Michigan Photographers* for the next iteration. It continues to be a great honor to work with both Dave Tinder and David Walters on this project as it grows in scope and meaning.

— Clayton Lewis

Curator of Graphic Materials



"John W. Hoag, Daguerrean Artist, Lansing, Mich., Dec. 14th, 1849."  
This daguerreotype self-portrait with sign-board indicates the sitter's profession.  
Likely the earliest known portrait of a Michigan photographer.

Clements Library Associates Board Member David B. Walters purchased the David V. Tinder Collection of Michigan Photography in 2006. The Library is holding the collection on deposit as Mr. Walters donates it incrementally in honor of Harold L. Walters, University of Michigan class of 1947, Engineering, and Marilyn S. Walters, University of Michigan class of 1950, LSA. Unless otherwise noted, all images reproduced here have been donated by David B. Walters.

Additional donors have added to the Tinder collection: Elaine Cato, Larry Filipczak, Donald Harrison, Andrew and Jill Kerkhoff, Cynthia Kerkhoff, David and Laurel Kovacs, Daisy Lovain, Peter and Cynthia Motzenbecker, David E. and Joanne Tinder, Keith and Angela Steffke, and David V. Tinder.

Much of the information in the captions is from Tinder's *Directory of Early Michigan Photographers*.

*you do not want any discussion in your favour I can therefore very well  
have him 1500 men I shall try something certain for a while  
I have no doubt at all that at any rate*



John D. Appleton, carpenter, and the house he built in Brighton, Michigan. Daguerreotypes by an unidentified artist, circa 1850. This Greek Revival-style house still stands on Grand River Avenue. The over-exposed portions of early daguerreotype plates naturally acquired a distinctive blue tint during development known as "solarization."  
Gift of Andrew and Jill Kerkhoff.



The Detroit Observatory, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Salt print photograph by Thomas D. Tooker circa, 1858. University president Henry Tappan's push to advance the University of Michigan as a research institution delivered one of the first observatories in the Midwest, built in 1854. It stands today with the original telescopes. Tooker was on campus to photograph university students and faculty for class albums. According to historian Patricia Whitesell, the man in this photo may be the observatory director Franz Brunnow, and the dog may be Tappan's Leo.



“Fountain at Grand Circus Park.” Detail of a stereograph photo by Detroit and Flint photographer James A. Jenney, circa 1876. Jenney was in the photographic business for over 25 years and his views of the booming lumber business and Detroit were distributed by dozens of vendors across the state.



“Cutting Down the Timber.” Albumen print by an unidentified photographer circa 1880s. From a set of 16 prints documenting the removal of long-cut timber from old-growth forests in Alcona county. Gift of David V. Tinder.

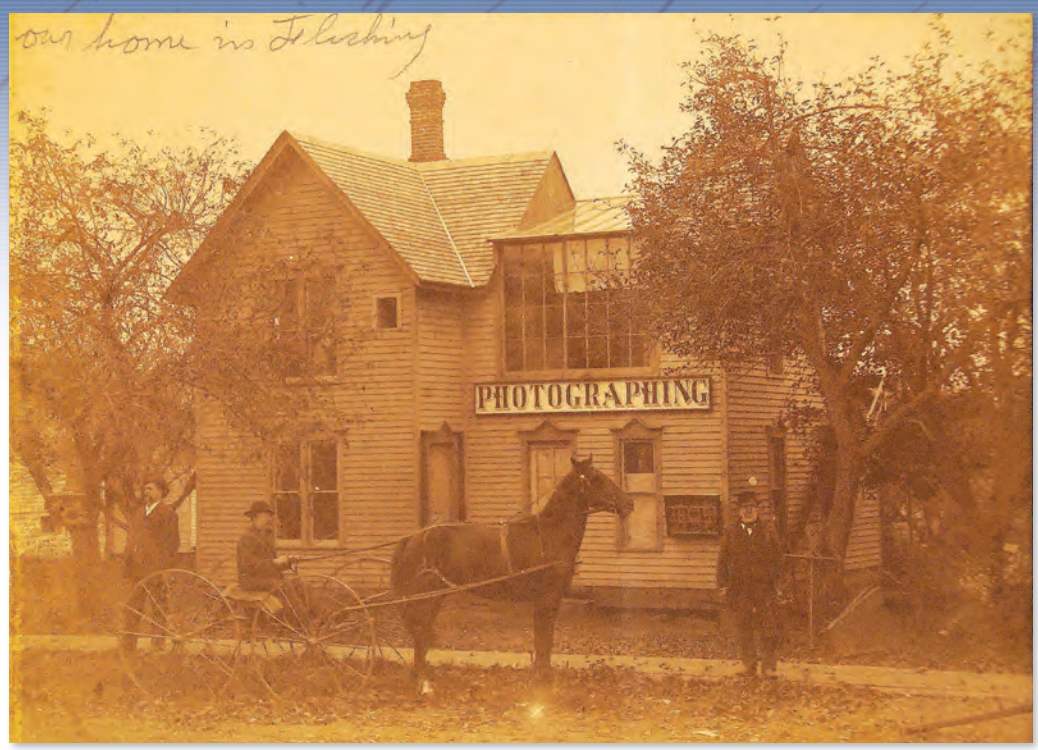


“Pictured Rocks-The Chapel.” Detail of a stereograph by Brainard F. Childs, circa 1873. Childs, who excelled at composing dramatic three-dimensional images, explored the Lake Superior region by land and water.



“Surveying Squad M.C.M. at Section 21 Mine, Ishpeming, Mich.” Gelatin silver print by Childs Art Gallery, 1909. Founded in 1873 by Brainard F. Childs, the Childs Art Gallery remained active in the Upper Peninsula into the 1950s.

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*well  
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Gallery and Residence of William Briley. Cabinet photograph by William W. Briley studio, Flushing, Michigan. The Briley family lived and worked in this house, converted in 1886 for the photography business. The large glass north-facing skylight and window illuminates the interior studio space. Note the outdoor display case of samples on the side of the house.



Barn Raising in Dexter. Gelatin silver print by Rupert Henry Scadin circa 1893. There are at least 17 people, a baby carriage, and two United States flags involved in this common rural community ritual. Scadin worked in Michigan, North Carolina, and Massachusetts. His wife Kate hand-colored many of his monochrome photos.



Michigan Central Train. Albumen prints by the Cadwallader Brothers, circa 1866. Pulled by the locomotive Persian, this magnificent express train stopped west of Detroit for this posed panorama, made up from two plates. The photographer's dark tent is likely in front of the baggage car.



Broom Brigade. Albumen print by an unidentified photographer, circa 1880s. Broom brigades, much like drill teams, were a popular form of recreational exercise for young women in the nineteenth century. This particularly well-appointed group is likely from Ann Arbor. Gift of Keith and Angela Steffke.



Slocum's Island baseball team. Albumen print by an unidentified photographer, 1882. The silver tea set and banner are likely trophies won at a tournament on Slocum's Island, now Elizabeth Park, near the city of Trenton. The dark-suited pair may be managers, leaving exactly nine players, one for each position.



Woodward Avenue. Cyanotype by John Baldwin Thomas, circa 1883-86. Anticipating the atmospheric urban views of the New York Photo Secessionists, Thomas captures the raking afternoon sunlight highlighting architectural details. The silhouetted carriage anchoring the foreground adds drama and mystery to the composition. An amateur photographer, Thomas was a professionally trained artist and lithographer working for the Calvert Lithograph Company of Detroit.

*you do not want any discussion in your favour I can therefore very well spare him. 1800 men I shall try something certainly towards the close of the year not better at any rate. It may be due to you that*



Portraiture in the Blair Studio. Cabinet photograph by Wilson H. Blair, circa 1889. As a child, Blair migrated to Allegan County from New York State with his parents, who began farming. After a twenty-year career as a photographer in that area, Blair returned to New York State and to farming. This charming promotional image may be of Blair and his three-year-old daughter Vera.



Royal T. Gillette with Camera and Car. Gelatin silver print by the Royal Photo Company, circa 1907. Royal Titus Gillette was an entrepreneurial photographer in the Grand Rapids area who used several automobiles for both expanding his territory and promoting his business.



Royal Photo Company Backroom. Gelatin silver print by the Royal Photo Company, circa 1907. Documentation of the back-room operations of early photographic studios is rare. That is Royal himself, supervising with cigar in hand. Note the kitten assisting the book-keeper on the left, and at right, across the desk, the hose from the camera's squeeze-bulb emanating from Royal's hidden right hand.

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"Burning the Mortgage of the Phyllis Wheatley Home, Detroit, Mich. Jan. 4, 1915." Gelatin silver print by Harvey Cook Jackson. Although there were likely many African American photographers working behind the scenes in nineteenth-century Detroit, it wasn't until 1916 that an African American, Harvey C. Jackson, opened a photographic business under his own name. Jackson's shop was in the same location from 1916 to 1940 and was prominent in documenting Detroit's black community. The Phyllis Wheatley Home in Detroit was founded in 1897 to assist African American women from the south establish careers in the north.



Bath School, after May 18, 1927. Gelatin silver print likely by Hiram Marple, working for Leavenworth Photographic of Lansing. Local school board treasurer Andrew Kehoe, angry at the cost of the new Bath Consolidated School, dynamited the building while classes were in session, killing 44, including himself. He had just previously killed his wife and set fire to his home. The Bath School Bombing of 1927 still stands as our nation's deadliest school attack.



"Michigan, Detroit. Automobile Works". Photogravure print by Emil Otto Hoppé, 1927. German-born Emil Hoppé, a pioneer of the modernist aesthetic in photography, was among the most famous photographers in Europe. Commissioned by publisher Orbis Terrarum, Hoppé travelled and photographed across the United States. Large-scale industrial scenes like this view of the Ford Highland Park Plant were among his favorite subjects. Gift of Elaine Cato.

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